



CHAPTER 1

CREATING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES IN NORTH CAROLINA

In the aftermath of an unprecedented series of major disasters, a statewide dialogue is taking place in North Carolina among state and local officials, business leaders, educators, environmentalists, lenders, agricultural officials, and the public at large – on the range of issues associated with the redevelopment of communities across eastern North Carolina. *How can a community achieve a balanced approach to community development and redevelopment that promotes economic and social goals, while achieving the goals of hazard mitigation and the conservation of natural resources?*

FOSTERING A DIALOGUE ON SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

In many respects, the post-disaster dialogue is centering on the quality of life in the state, particularly in rural communities. The disaster has put a spotlight on the difficult plight of the small farmer in North Carolina, the decline of once dominant agricultural sectors such as tobacco, the advance of agri-business and the attendant environmental problems posed by farming at this scale. Communities such as the City of Kinston and Lenoir County are examining ways to revitalize the downtown business district as an integral part of that community's redevelopment strategy. Housing relocation options are being explored that couple flood hazard protection with in-filling and other "smart growth" principles. Electric and water utility owners and operators are discussing strategies to make their utilities more resistant to flooding and high wind, and thereby ensuring their functionality in the next disaster.

The concept of sustainable development is increasingly under discussion, which recognizes the limits of the earth's resources, and importance of managing development in a manner that does not compromise the